

IBS Treatment Center Newsletter

1229 Madison Street, Suite 1220, Seattle, Washington 98104 (206) 264-1111 www.IBSTreatmentCenter.com

July 2006



Patient Testimonial

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Absolutely phenomenal! I spread your company's name wherever I go. Best Treatment Center I could have ever dreamed of. AWESOME!! Lost 19 1/2 lbs in the first 60 days, and I wasn't even looking for that. What a surprising bonus. You have given me much of my life back!!! Thank You! Thank You!

Dennis Spencer

Beyond Fiber: Solving Constipation

Constipation is a problem experienced by people of all ages. It is a problem that we see every day at the IBS Treatment Center, and it comes in a variety of forms and a range of symptoms. We also find that it is usually not being adequately treated. For most people there is a direct cause for their constipation that can be easily identified and treated so that medications and supplements are not required. There is

no reason to suffer needlessly from constipation, even if it is a common problem.

What does it matter if you're constipated?

Obviously, if you are in discomfort then it matters to you. But constipation is a much more significant problem than it may first appear. Being constipated is not just about having fewer bowel movements, abdominal pain, straining, or any of the other possible associated symptoms. More importantly for long-term health, it's a serious dysfunction of your entire digestive and elimination process.

Constipation is a symptom of slow transit time (not unlike traffic). When the colon is backed up, then the small intestine is backed up. And when the intestines are backed up, the stomach has a delay in gastric emptying. This is why some people with constipation also experience heartburn and reflux, not to mention the obvious abdominal pain it causes.

This of course affects digestion and therefore can contribute to the malabsorption of nutrients, which can lead to a wide spectrum of health problems. At the other end of the gastrointestinal tract it also causes a delay in the removal of waste from the entire body.

How does constipation negatively affect the entire body?

The liver is responsible for removing a majority of toxins (including pollutants, food additives, home chemicals, hormones, drugs, heavy metals, and even

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cholesterol) from the blood stream. Much of this waste is then dumped into the gastrointestinal (GI) tract for final disposal.

If the GI tract is slowed in its transit time, then these toxins are not removed in a timely manner and may even be reabsorbed. This is akin to setting the garbage out at the curb but not having it picked up for several weeks. It's not good for the neighborhood, so to speak.

What qualifies as constipation?

There are several ways of defining constipation. However, the two major issues are the frequency of bowel movements and their firmness. Optimal GI function requires having a bowel movement at least *once per day*.

Bowel movements that are difficult to pass, very firm, or small pellets also qualify as constipation. Other symptoms may include bloating, distension, abdominal pain, or a sense of incomplete emptying.

If you don't have these symptoms but you rely on extra fiber (such as Metamucil), a stool softener, laxative, or some other method to prevent these symptoms then you have constipation.

What causes constipation?

Most chronic constipation is due to either food allergies or hypothyroidism, or a combination of both. Very few people are truly deficient in fiber, even though taking excess fiber may ultimately relieve the condition. Many medications also can cause constipation as a side effect.

How is constipation treated?

Short-term treatments for relieving constipation include fiber, water, exercise, flax oil, magnesium (such as Milk of Magnesia), laxatives, and even

enemas and suppositories. A long-term need for any of these to relieve constipation indicates that the underlying cause has not been addressed.

How do I resolve my constipation?

To permanently resolve chronic constipation the source of the problem must be discovered. This generally requires a thorough screening for both **food allergies** and **hypothyroidism**, two conditions that are often missed by doctors.

More information about food allergies is available on our website, www.IBSTreatmentCenter.com. Food allergies are well described in scientific journals as a cause of constipation. A list of medical references is also available on our website at www.IBSTreatmentCenter.com.

If you suffer from constipation or any of the symptoms mentioned in this article we urge you to make an appointment at our office by calling 206-264-1111. ■

[Want to hear more from Dr. Wangen? He now keeps a BLOG on the website! Check-in regularly for his latest articles and insights! Click here to see his most recent entry!](#)



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Events Calendar:

****This week!* July: IBS Support Group**

IBS sufferers wait no more! The IBS Support Group at the IBS Treatment Center starts this week on Thursday, July 06, 2006! Come meet Dr. Wangen and get answers! The group will meet on the **first Tuesday of every month** after this initial Thursday meeting (moved due to the holiday). Meetings are held **at the IBS Treatment Center**. Click [here](#) for details.

August: GIG (Gluten Intolerance Group) Support Group

Dealing with a Gluten allergy or intolerance can often feel like an uphill battle, but you are not alone! New information, ideas and special products are coming out all the time. Come to the Central Seattle chapter of GIG and stay on top of it all while enjoying the company of people who, like you, know what it's like to just want a piece of real bread or a beer! Meetings will be held on the **2nd Wednesday of each month**, starting in August, **at the IBS Treatment Center** (also known as the Center for Food Allergies) and most will be attended by Dr. Stephen Wangen, founder of the IBS Treatment Center and Center for Food Allergies. Click [here](#) for details.



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